

ISSUE 136

Ramadaan 1439 | May 2018



ISLAMIC FOCUS

LIFE LESSONS IN
**SURAH
YUSUF**

INSIGHT
INTO FIQH:
ZAKAAH

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

IMAM OMAR ABRAHAMS

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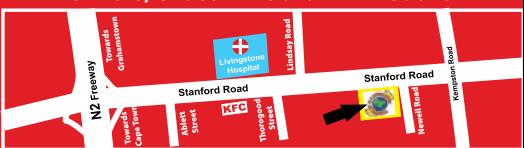
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FROM THE EDITOR

AHLAN WASAHLAN

The noble Quran is a book that has the plan for life. In an attempt to bring about appreciation of the invaluable advices contained in it, we bring you some life lessons from Surah Yusuf. Indispensable character traits like forgiveness, discretion, prioritizing and battling the temptations of sin are outlined in our Quran feature.

Islamic Focus prides itself on not only quenching the thirst of people seeking knowledge through the power of the word, but on providing community services. This includes the hugely popular funeral notices for Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, community outreach in the form of innovative events like the Charity Symposium, events and happenings notifications, the Eastern Cape Masjid/Madressa/Musalla database and the annual list of Taraweeh venues and readers in the city. We hope that in some way or the other we have

managed to touch people's lives in a positive way.

One of the most fruitful and fulfilling aspects of being an editor of the Islamic Focus magazine is to conduct the interviews about people who have inspired us through their lives. I can only sit and marvel at how people dedicated their lives to uplifting others, and be amazed at their lifelong passion for Islam. This edition's biographical sketch is of Imam Omar Abrahams, fondly known as Boeta Markie.

I'm always on the lookout for stories that inspire and lives that are an inspiration. Have you got something to say that will resonate with others? Drop me a line, and we could publish your article: info@islamicfocus.co.za

*Muhammad Badsha
(Moulana)*



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Consideration for Others



One of the salient teachings of Islam is consideration for others:

CHILD CRYING The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, 'I stand in prayer and would like to make it long but I hear the crying of a child and shorten my prayer not wanting to make things difficult for its mother.' (Bukhari)

WEAPONS 'Whoever enters our Musjid or passes through our market with arrows, he should hold them by their heads lest it should injure any Muslim.' (Bukhari)

PRAYER The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, 'When one of you leads the Salaah he should not prolong it because the congregation includes those who are feeble, ill or old.' One version adds: 'those who have to attend to work'. While offering prayers alone, you may pray as long as you like.' (Bukhari)

VISITOR The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam would not turn away from his visitor in order to attend to anything until his visitor has turned away to leave. When he met anyone and shook hands with him, the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam would not be the first to withdraw his hand. He would wait until the other person withdrew his hand.

TALKS Ibn Masood radhiallahu anhu narrates that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam used to take care of us in preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we might not get bored. (Bukhari 1:68)

ISLAM ENJOINS LOVE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE POOR:

LOVE The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said to his wife, 'O Aisha, love the poor and let them come to you and Allah will draw you near to Himself.' (Bukhari)

FRUITS OF PARADISE Abu Saeed Al-Khudri radhiallahu anhu narrates that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said: 'If a Muslim clothes a Muslim when he is naked, Allah will clothe him with green garments of Paradise; if a Muslim feeds a Muslim when he is hungry, Allah will feed him with fruits of Paradise; and if any Muslim gives a Muslim drink when he is thirsty, Allah will give him pure wine which is sealed to drink.' (Abu Dawud)

HUNGER Ibn Abbas radhiallahu anhuma said that he heard the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam say: 'The believer is not the one who eats when his neighbour beside him is hungry.'

HELP Abu Huraira radhiallahu anhu narrates that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said: 'Whoever relieves a believer's distress of the distressful aspects of this world, Allah will relieve him from a difficulty of the difficulties of the Hereafter...' (Muslim)

Marriage is also an arena for displaying consideration for your spouse. Here are valuable tips from the life of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam on how husbands should treat their wives:

CONSIDERATION Be considerate of your wife's feelings. The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam delayed an entire army to search for a bracelet that his wife Aisha radhiallahu anha lost."

COMFORT The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam wiped away the tears of his wife Safiyyah radhiallahu anha with his own hands.

CHIVALRY The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam would kneel besides his camel to let Safiyyah radhiallahu anha put her foot on his knees and climb onto the camel. He came out of the Musjid to see his wife Safiyyah radhiallahu anha home. He didn't say: Go back home, but walked with her.



Magical Memories

Children who have the ability to recall and make sense of memories from daily life can use them to better develop a sense of identity, form relationships and make sound choices in adolescence and adulthood, according to Sue Shellenbarger, creator and writer of the The Wall Street Journal's Work & Family column. "Our personal memories define who we are. They bond us together," says Robyn Fivush, a psychology professor at Emory University in Atlanta.

Have we given some thought to the type of memories we are giving the next generation? Where once we could call up the enticing aroma of freshly baked pies from Ouma's oven, we now have the nondescript smells of countless fast food joints. Are we happy with being remembered as the parents who bought tablets, laptops and TV games? Holidays are being remembered more and

for which shopping malls were visited in foreign countries than for the culture, and natural and architectural wonders of those lands.

Playing a game of cricket with Dad in the back yard brings with it the memory of a memorable shot, the frustration of trying to bowl him out, the broken window as a result of a shot that connected. Can the sanitized digital version boast the same intensity of remembering or the skills that were learnt?

Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wa sallam counted a child who remembered his deceased parents fondly and sent up a prayer for them as a valuable avenue of continued reward after death. Can we hope to be remembered as special people if we are not leaving behind fond, engraved memories?

When Bilal radhiyallahu anhu, the official caller to prayer of Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, returned after some time to Madinah following the demise of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, and once more rendered the call to prayer people started to cry for it reminded them of the early days of Islam. What is remarkable is that those early days were ones of hardship and suffering, yet it was that very sweat and tears which made the memories so precious.

There needs to be a more proactive role in building memories for the next generation or the virtual lives of the movies and digital games might be the only memories our kids can dredge up of their past. History provides a valuable link for continuity of society but it is made in the sandcastles of the beach; not in the virtual world of Minecraft.



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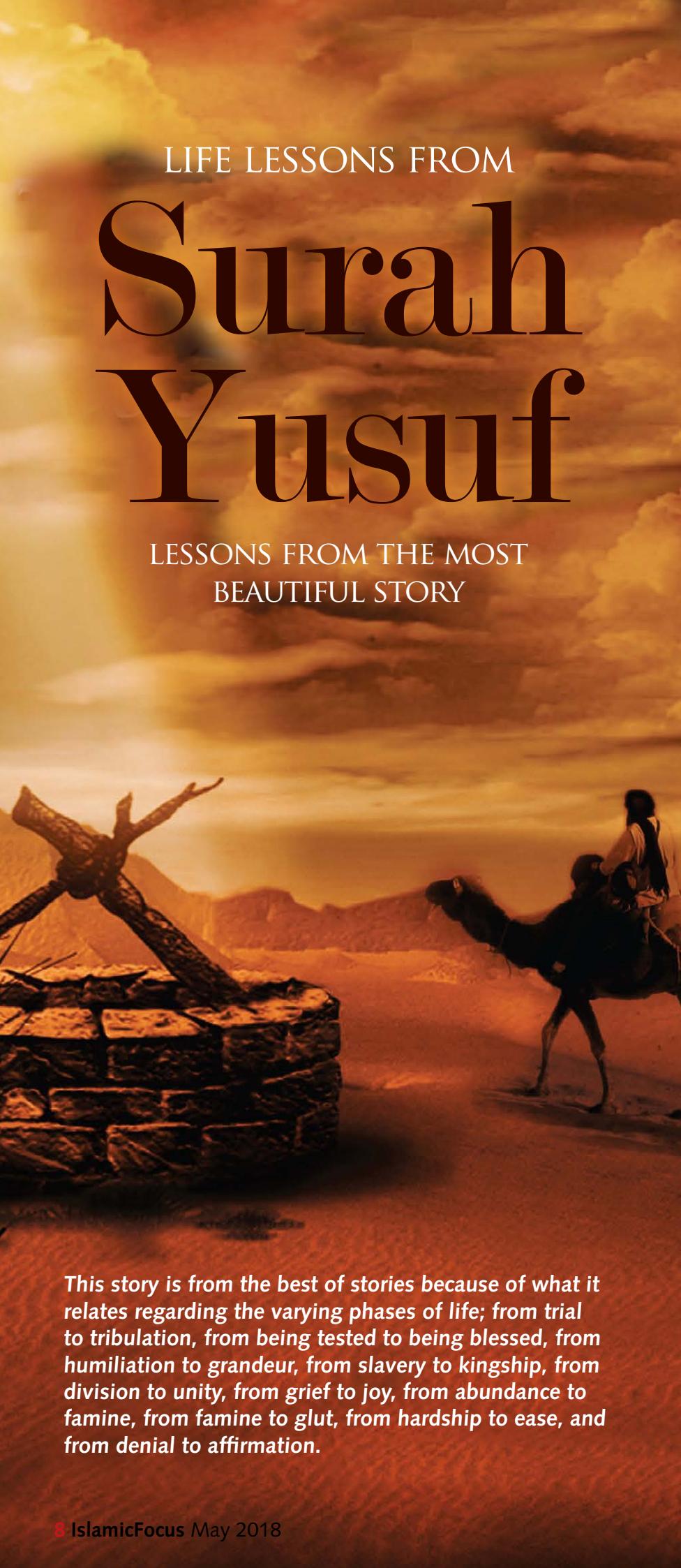
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LIFE LESSONS FROM

Surah Yusuf

LESSONS FROM THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL STORY

This story is from the best of stories because of what it relates regarding the varying phases of life; from trial to tribulation, from being tested to being blessed, from humiliation to grandeur, from slavery to kingship, from division to unity, from grief to joy, from abundance to famine, from famine to glut, from hardship to ease, and from denial to affirmation.

1 DISCRETION

When Yusuf alaihis salaam saw a dream of his brothers being subservient to him, he related it to his father Yaqub alaihis salaam who told him not to relate it to his brothers, as they would plot against him. "Seek help in fulfilling your needs (and ambitions) by being discrete (and telling as few people as possible); for every person who has a blessing, there are others who harbour jealousy against him (and would love for him to fail). (Majmaul Zawaaid)

2 FORGIVENESS

When Yusuf alaihis salaam's brothers came to him after all they had done to ruin him, and he now had the authority to seek revenge, he displayed good character by pardoning them unconditionally. The man who had been in jail with him, forgot to remind the king about Yusuf alaihis salaam languishing in jail. When the man came some years later to ask Yusuf alaihis salaam for help, he did not reproach him.

3 GOOD CHARACTER

Yusuf alaihis salaam was recognised as a good man while he was an imprisoned slave, from the lower levels of society. And he was recognised as the same when he was in the government. Our status in society or life circumstances should not allow us to lose good character.

4 BLESSING FOR OTHERS

The blessing that Allah bestows upon a person is not simply restricted to that particular individual, rather it is a blessing that encompasses him, his family and his friends. And whatever good is obtained is because of that person. Allah Ta'ala recounts the blessing upon Yusuf alaihis salaam as well as his illustrious predecessors, "Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of dreams (and other things) and perfect His Favour on you and on the offspring of Yaqub, as He perfected it on your fathers, Ibrahim and Ishaq before." A good household produces good offspring.

5 SIN LEADS TO SIN

One needs to be cautious of the evil results of sins, because one sin often leads to many others. The brothers of Yusuf alaihis salaam tried varying plots when they wanted to separate him from his father; they lied many times, they falsified the blood on the shirt, they came at night pretending to cry, and all of this is as a result of one sin, one thing leading to a next.

6 WHAT MATTERS

What really counts in the life of a person is a successful ending and not the deficient beginning. For the children of Yaqub alaihis salaam did what they did in the beginning which was a very reprehensible act. They eventually ended in sincere repentance, complete forgiveness from Yusuf alaihis salaam and their father, and dua was made for them to be forgiven.

7 SEDUCTION

One has to exercise extreme caution to avoid being secluded with members of the opposite gender. Always be on the guard against love for someone that may be harmful. The wife of the king did what she did because of her infatuation with Yusuf alaihis salaam that lead her to try to seduce him, tell lies about him and cause him to be imprisoned for a long time.

8 FLEE SIN

When faith enters the heart and one does things to please Allah Ta'ala, Allah will defend one from all types of evil. "Thus it was, that We might turn away from him evil and illegal sexual intercourse. Surely, he was one of Our sincere slaves."

Whenever the servant sees a situation that might be one of

fitnah or cause of sin, he should flee as far as possible from it to save himself from sin. Yusuf alaihis salaam did not let the seeming impossibility of a locked room stop him from fleeing the seduction of the king's wife.

9 PRIORITIZING

When Yusuf alaihis salaam was asked by the two young men with him in prison to interpret their dreams, there were other matters of importance that they were in greater need of knowing before their questions were to be answered. This is a sign of a teacher possessing great intelligence, and the ability to correctly guide and teach, for when Yusuf alaihis salaam was asked by the two young men about their dreams, he first called them to Allah Ta'ala before interpreting their dreams.

10 ASKING FOR HELP

It is not considered depending on others (instead of Allah), if one happens to get into a difficult situation and one seeks the assistance of someone whom he thinks can alleviate his situation. Hence, Yusuf alaihis salaam said to the one whom he knew would be saved, "Mention me to your lord (i.e. your king, so as to get me out of the prison)."

11 DEFENDING YOUR HONOUR

There is no blame on a person for defending himself against a false accusation. Rather this is something praiseworthy. Yusuf alaihis salaam refused to leave the prison until his innocence was proven.

12 ESTABLISHING YOUR CREDENTIALS

As long as a person is not pretentious or dishonest, he can inform others about his good qualities, if he knows that he

is qualified or suited for a job. Yusuf alaihis salaam said, "Set me over the storehouses of the land; I will indeed guard them with full knowledge." Likewise, leadership is not something that is blameworthy if the one who is in charge fulfils the rights of Allah and the rights of His servants to the best of his ability.

13 ENTERTAINING GUESTS

It is from the sunnah of the Prophets to host guests and treat them honourably. Yusuf alaihis salaam was no exception, and he said, "Do you not see that I give full measure, and that I am the best of the hosts?"

14 REASONABLE DOUBT

Having negative thoughts about someone is not something that is always prohibited if there are accompanying evidences to support this suspicion. Yaqub alaihis salaam said to his sons after they came to him claiming that a wolf ate Yusuf alaihis salaam, "Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale." And he said regarding their next brother, "Can I entrust him to you except as I entrusted his brother (Yusuf) to you before?"

15 SUBLIMINAL SUGGESTIONS

Watch what you say and to who you say it. You may be giving the other person ammunition to use against you. You might even be giving him ideas. Yaqub alaihis salaam was the one who gave his sons the excuse they needed to cover up their abduction of Yusuf alaihis salaam. He said, "I am worried that wolf will eat him." His sons used that very tactic. When they came back in the evening, they said, "A wolf ate your son."

INSPIRATION: WHEAT AND BARLEY

There once lived a pious man who was enslaved to a wicked master. The righteous slave wanted to teach his master a lesson that he would never forget: a lesson that would make him change his ways. The master told him one day to plant some wheat.

The slave took this opportunity to teach him a lesson. He went and collected some barley seeds and planted them. As the season drew nearer for harvesting, the master was enraged to find that after all this hard work and all this time his slave had planted the wrong seeds.

In his rage and anger, he scolded the slave saying, 'Why did you do this?' The righteous slave said, 'I hoped that the barley would come out as wheat.' The master shouted, 'How can you plant barley and expect wheat to grow.'

The slave said quietly, 'How can you disobey Allah and expect His Mercy? How can you openly challenge His laws and hope for Paradise?' The master was stunned and became silent. He understood what the slave was trying to tell him and said, 'You have taught me something today that I have never realized before. You are free for the sake of Allah.'

While we hope in Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness, let us do those things which will please Him so that we can reap the best benefits when our eyes close, leaving this world behind forever, sinking into our dark graves underground, alone.

Seasonal Fasting



Summer FASTING



WINTER FASTING

Ibn Rajab has a section in *ata'if al-Ma'arif* about the virtues of fasting during hot days: '... And from the acts of worship whose reward is multiplied during the heat is fasting ...'

Muadh bin Jabal radhiallahu anhu expressed regret on his deathbed that he would no longer experience this mid-day thirst.

Abu Bakr radhiallahu anhu would fast in summer and not in winter, and Umar radhiallahu anhu advised his son on his deathbed: 'Try to obtain the characteristics of faith,' and the first one he mentioned was fasting in the intense summer heat.

Abu Musa radhiallahu anhu would search out the days that were so hot that one would feel he was being cooked, and he would fast those days.

The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said: "Winter is the spring of a believer for its nights are lengthy so he offers (additional) Tahajjud Salaah and its days are short so he is (easily) able to fast." (Musnad Ahmed 3:15)

Amir ibn Masud radhiallahu anhu reported: The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, "Fasting in the winter is the easy reward." (Tirmidhi 797)

Abu Huraira radhiallahu anhu said, "Shall I tell you about easy rewards?" They said, "O Abu Huraira, what are they?" He replied, "Fasting in winter." (Hilyat al-Awliya 1356)

Ibn Masud radhiallahu anhu used to say, "Welcome to winter, blessings descend during it; its nights are long and therefore conducive to praying and its days are short conducive to fasting."

Mr & Mrs Rat

A South African man travelled to Pakistan to meet some of his relatives there. Among other things he bought for them chocolates.

On reaching Pakistan, he headed for his hotel and slept. The next morning he discovered that the chocolates had all been nibbled on by the Rats.

And the man thought to himself: Imagine the effort that had gone into the manufacture of the chocolates- the milk obtained from the cows looked after on a dairy farm; from there to the dairy; the cocoa from cocoa plantations; the sugar from fields and the sugar mills.

All the ingredients were put together, the chocolate went to the shop, this particular man bought them, purchased an expensive ticket and transported the chocolates thousands of kilometres away; all to provide a meal for Mr and Mrs Rat!

If so much preparation and planning went into providing food for rats, will not a Muslim who lives in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala, the Provider, get his needs fulfilled by that same Allah?

Source: Moulana Yunus Patel rahimahullah



MUSIIM MOTHERHOOD

The First School

Growing up, Imam Malik rahimahullah wanted to be a singer as he had a nice voice. How many of us can see similar ambitions in our little four year olds? His mother talked him out of it, she told him to learn the knowledge of Islam. She would get him ready dressed as a teacher and send him to the teacher to learn. When he would return home from his classes, she would sit and learn from him what he was taught that day. Over time, Imam Malik rahimahullah fell in love with his teachers and realised this was his path.

Imam Shafi rahimahullah's mother had a vision for her son, a vision that she fulfilled with no money to her name. She would send her son to teachers, he would come back saying the teachers ignore him because he wasn't a fee paying student. His mother would respond by telling him to show the most exemplary of manners in his classes, so that no teacher will have any complaints of him. When he told his mother he had no paper or ink to make notes with, she told him to use his memory – which was the beginning of Imam Shafi rahimahullah's photographic memory. But she didn't stop at

that, she would go out and find bones and papers that other people would throw out, to give to her son to use to take down notes. She would collect drops of ink, wait for a jar to fill and then give him that jar of ink to use. This was the origin of the knowledge that Imam Shafi rahimahullah had.

Imam Ahmad rahimahullah's mother would leave in his clothes little notes of Islamic reminders. She would wake up before fajr, heat water for his wudhu, wake him up and then walk him in pitch darkness to the masjid for fajr salah. She would then wait for all the classes to finish and tell him to be the last to leave the masjid after all the teachers had left.

If you've read this far, how do you now feel? Do you feel like waking up tomorrow, making your gift of motherhood a reason to attain Jannah?

Imam Malik rahimahullah's mother used her wisdom to change her son's want, knowing what is more beneficial for his world and his hereafter. Imam Shafi rahimahullah's mother didn't sit, feeling sorry for herself being a single

widowed mother with no money. She turned her reality to work for her and her son. Imam Ahmad rahimahullah's mother sacrificed her sleep so her son could smell the fragrance of fajr salah at the masjid. It was in these mothers' Madressas that unmatched scholars grew.

Seeking Jannah is for every believer. Seeking it through everything we do is something not many of us will master. We can only try. Just like these Super mums did, leaving behind offspring who's teachings resonate with us even today, long after they themselves have left the world. All of this is ultimately in the book of deeds of their mothers. Nor can we forget the beauty of dua; it was the dua of **Imam Bukhari rahimahullah's mother** that restored his eyesight.

The Greatest Moms of all Time

Did you know
that Imam Shafi
rahimahullah's mother used
to collect drops of ink in a jar
and give it to him to use when
it was full?

INSIGHT INTO FIQH

Differences between the Shafi and Hanafi Mathab in Zakaah

Port Elizabeth happens to have a healthy fusion between followers of the Shafi and Hanafi Fiqh. Many a home will have a mix of members following the two schools of thought within Islamic jurisprudence.

In fact, most if not all the Madressas in the city teach both the Fiqhs to accommodate for the students of the two Mathabs who

attend. Many a Masjid shares Imams and Muazzins of both the Mathabs.

In view of this, we bring you a simplified version of the main differences between the Shafi and Hanafi Mathabs with regards to Fasting. This is only intended as a guide and detailed answers should be sought from the respective Ulama.

1 Child

Shafi: The guardian of a child or insane person has to pay Zakaat from the child's property if it reaches an amount that makes Zakaat compulsory.

Hanafi: Zakaat is not obligatory on an insane person nor on a child who has not reached the age of maturity.

2 Nisab

Shafi: The Nisaab for gold is 84.8 grams and for silver 592.9 grams.

Hanafi: The Nisaab for gold is 87.48 grams and for silver 596 grams.

3 Jewellery

Shafi: No Zakaat on gold or silver jewellery that is permissible for use and is kept for use.

Hanafi: Zakaat is payable on gold or silver jewellery.

4 Debts

Shafi: Anyone who has the Nisab must pay Zakaat even though he has debts. Debts do not remove the obligation of Zakaat.

Hanafi: Debts are subtracted from Zakaatable wealth. Zakaat will only be paid on the balance if it reaches Nisab.

5 Husband

Shafi: The wife can give Zakaat to her husband even though he will spend it on her provided he qualifies under one of the categories.

Hanafi: The wife cannot give Zakaat to her husband.

6 Fruit and vegetables

Shafi: There is no Zakaat on the fruit produced by a farmer except for dates and grapes. There is no Zakaat on vegetables.

Hanafi: There is Zakaat on all fruit and vegetables produced by a farmer.

7 Minimum amount for crops

Shafi: The minimum quantity for crops to qualify for Zakaat is 5 wasaqs. A wasaq is a measure of volume. 5 wasaqs equate to 900 litres of volume; this is 1800 litres for rice etc stored in the kernel.

Hanafi: Zakaat is due on any amount of crops produced by a farmer, little or lot.

NOTE

These rules are collected from the mainstream views of the Muftis of the two Mathabs. They are listed to give an appreciation of the differences and to remove any misconceptions.

They can also serve as a handy guide for teachers who need to teach students of a Mathab different from their own, or for Imams whose congregations are different from their own.

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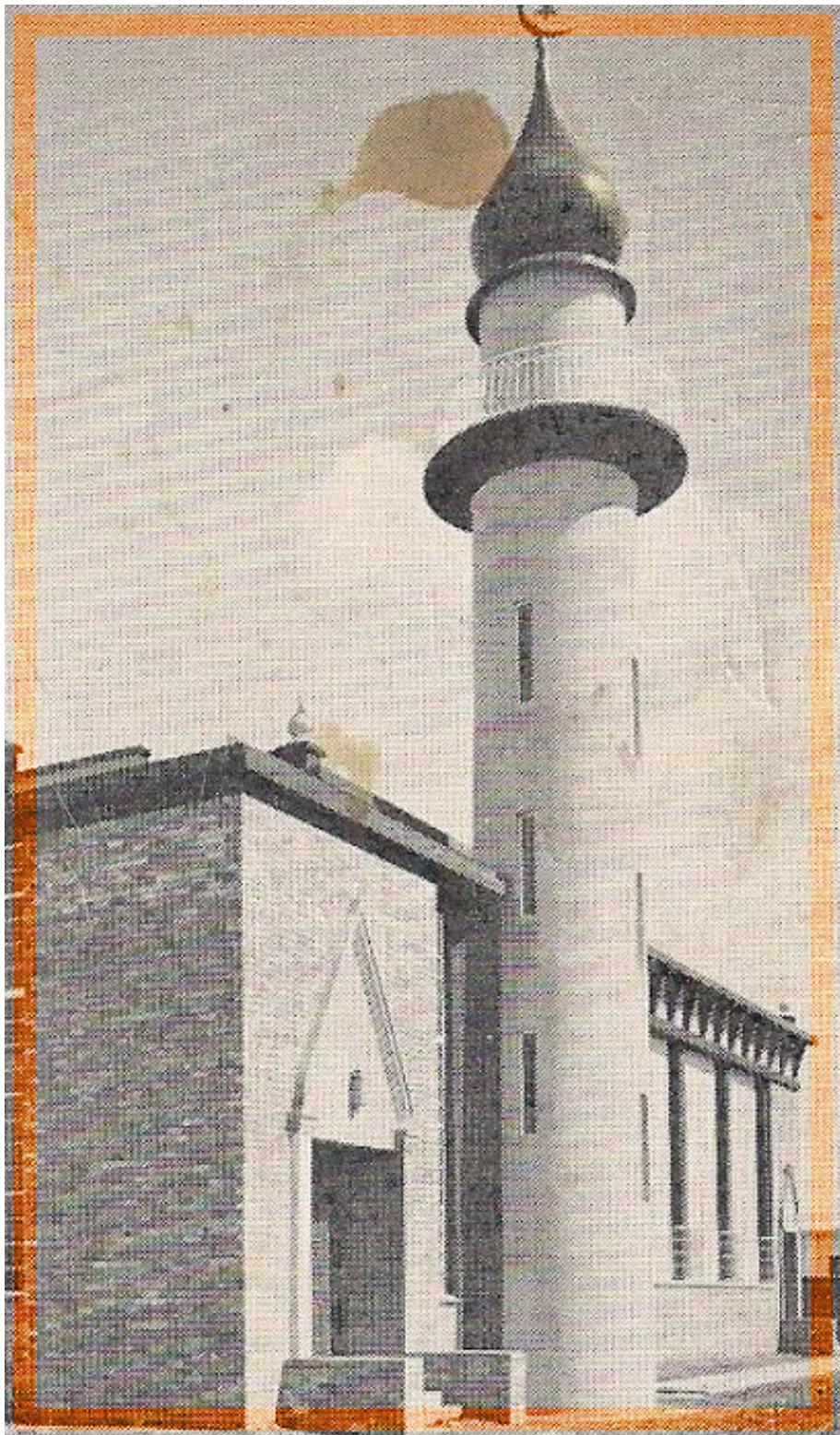
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IMAM *Omar Abrahams*

A glimpse into the life of a stalwart of Port Elizabeth as told by his son. Imam Omar Abrahams or Boeta Markie as he was affectionately known, epitomized the generation who preserved Islam in Port Elizabeth. In fact they laid the foundation for its rise.

He was born in 1935 in South End, Port Elizabeth. Imam Omar had a tough start in life, walking to school barefoot at times as the family did not have enough money. He was one of 13 siblings that form a part of the large Jappie and Abrahams families in Port Elizabeth.

As was usual at the time, Imam Omar went up to primary school only. Thereafter he entered an apprenticeship in tailoring which led to nearly seven decades in the career. He learnt to read Quran as did many others while working with the tailors. They would teach Quran to their apprentices and included Hajie Maan who taught Imam Omar. These sort of early Madressas were known as Slamse skools and were a vital cog in ensuring that people could read the Quran.

Another important component that allowed people to learn to read Quran were the Batcha Jamaats. Groups would gather at people's homes every Tuesday night and they would read portions of the Quran, eventually making a Khatam. Tajweed was corrected and many learnt to read in a melodious tone in these gatherings. Imam Omar was a prominent member of one of the best known Batcha Jamaats.

Imam Omar had a beautiful voice when reading Quran and was among those whom the late Imam Jardien would use to read Quran before his Masjid programs. His mother Khadijah had a great influence in engendering the love for Quran in her children. She was well known for regularly finishing Khatams of the Quran. Imam Omar himself would make it a habit of reading Quran daily, and had a routine of reading Surah Yaseen without fail after Maghrib.

His love for the Masjid was ignited in South End where he would

frequent Rudolph Street Masjid. There he would be given opportunities to give the Athan. This held him in good stead when the Muslim community had to leave South End under the Group Areas Act. When they established Masjid Taqwa in Gelvan, Imam Omar rendered the first Athan. Sheikh Jamiel Jardien was the first Imam. He would also help with Imamat and was eventually appointed one of the official deputy Imams for Salaah.

Boeta Markie was married for 46 years and the couple had four sons and one daughter. His wife passed away in 2006. His grandchildren count a number of Huffaz of the Quran among them, testimony to the love of Quran Imam Omar passed on to them. He would recite Quran aloud, thus enabling the kids to listen and learn how to recite. It was his practice to take his kids to the Masjid and teach them the importance of Salaah. His attachment to the Masjid meant that when the Muslims had to move from South End, one of their first moves was to establish Masjid Taqwa. Boeta Markie was very active in this project. One of his sons, Abdullah went on to become a cofounder of the Nasuddin Muslim school in Port Elizabeth.

Imam Omar established his own tailoring business by the time he was in his late twenties. This was initially in Makans Building in South End, and later in Brighton Building in Korsten after the forced removal by the Apartheid government. His son recalls how he would be especially busy around Eid making outfits for people. The kids would help with removing the extra cotton strands.



When Imam Omar was forced to leave South End, he initially stayed in Avalon Crescent in Gelvan. Thereafter he bought a plot of land in Parkside and the house was built by assorted builders in the family lending a hand on weekends. In fact, many a family home in the Malay community was built like this in the early days.

Imam Omar was one of the many who benefitted from the lessons of Sheikh Jamiel Jardien. He quietly went about lending strength to the Muslim community in various ways. This included being a founding member of the Muslim Burial Society. He would actively participate in washing and shrouding the deceased. He would be punctual with his Zuhra Salaahs at Masjid Huda in Korsten, coming daily from his tailor shop. He had a habit of fasting Mondays and Thursdays every week.

He had the opportunity of performing Hajj twice as well as Umrah on several occasions. His son says that the marvel was that his parents made these journeys on the humble earnings of his father's tailoring

and his mother's dressmaking. He attributes this to the blessing his parents had in their lives due to their attachment to Islam and their kind spirits.

Imam Omar and his wife were known to be very big hearted. The practice was that Imam Omar's mother would cook a big pot of food on Fridays and her door was open for anyone to come and eat. Imam Omar continued this tradition by making sure that the family all came for lunch to his house on Friday after the passing of his mother. The kids remember him going around finishing any leftovers they hadn't finished as he did not like to see food wasted. His benevolent habit was to collect all the chicken bones and feed them to the cats. Imam Omar strove to instill the value of family and togetherness.

He attended Tabligh Ijtimas and would be supportive of the work. His love for Hajj and the Hujjaj meant that he and his wife would ensure that the Malay tradition of giving those going on Hajj a slavat or envelope of money was done with great love and attention. His house was always full of family eating the traditional Saturday lunch of fish and chips, or Saturday night chops and chips. No one was turned away.

Imam Omar passed away in 2018 at the age of 83 after losing his battle with cancer. His Janaza was attended by close to 1,000 people. His legacy of love for the different aspects of Islam influenced the following two generations and ensures that Islam is strong in Port Elizabeth.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF *Fasting*



"Fasting is a protection from illnesses of the spirit, heart and body; its benefits are countless. It has a wonderful effect in preserving health, melting excesses, restraining one from consuming things which could be harmful; this is especially so when it is moderate and practiced at the best times according to Islamic guidelines and the body's natural need for it. It then contains such rest for the faculties and organs as to preserve their powers.

It has a great influence on the preservation of health. It is a spiritual and natural medicine. When the one fasting observes both the natural and legal conditions of fasting its benefit is great for heart and body." (Ibn Qayyim, *Al-Tibb al-Nabawi*, trans. pp. 238-9)

Many are the quotes extolling the benefits of fasting, from the Hadith to physicians. Here is a selected list:

"Make it a practice to fast; you will enjoy good health." (Tabraani, quoted by Imam Ghazali)

"I must say that fasting, when combined with a properly selected diet, is the nearest approach to a 'cure-all' that is possible to conceive." (John Tilden)

This 5000-year old practice has been used by hundreds of doctors around the world to eradicate high blood pressure, normalize body weight, lower LDL cholesterol, protect you against heart disease, and possibly combat some cancers. (Frederic Patenaude)

"Fasting is the greatest remedy; the physician within." (Philippus Paracelsus, one of the three fathers of Western medicine)

"The best of all medicines is resting and fasting." (Benjamin Franklin)

"I believe that fasting is the "missing link" in the Western diet." (Elson Haas, M.D., *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*)

H.Whiteman, in an article for Medical News Today, says that a number of medical studies have suggested intermittent fasting has numerous health benefits, including weight loss, lower blood pressure and reduced cholesterol.

1. HELPS WEIGHT LOSS

Fasting can be a safe way to lose weight as many studies have shown that intermittent fasting allows the body to burn through fat cells more effectively than just regular dieting.

Intermittent fasting allows the body to use fat as its primary source of energy instead of sugar. Many athletes now use fasting as means to hitting low body fat percentages for competitions. Since the body is unable to get its energy from food during fasting, it dips into glucose that is stored in the liver and muscles. This begins around 8 hours after the last meal is consumed. When the stored glucose has been used up, the body then begins to burn fat as a source of energy, which can result in weight loss.

2. IMPROVES INSULIN SENSITIVITY

Fasting has been shown to have a positive effect on insulin sensitivity, allowing you to tolerate carbohydrates (sugar) better than if you didn't fast.

According to Dr. Michael Mosley - author of The Fast Diet books – such an eating plan can not only help people lose weight, but it offers an array of other health benefits.

"Studies of intermittent fasting show that not only do people see improvements in blood pressure and their cholesterol levels, but also in their insulin sensitivity," he adds. In June 2014, Medical News Today reported on a study suggesting periodic fasting may reduce the risk of diabetes among people at high risk for the condition.

What is more, the team found that cancer patients who fasted for 3 days prior to chemotherapy were protected against immune system

damage that can be caused by the treatment, which they attribute to immune cell regeneration.

3. SPEEDS UP METABOLISM

Intermittent fasting gives your digestive system a rest, and this can energise your metabolism to burn through calories more efficiently. Intermittent fasts can regulate your digestion and promote healthy bowel function, thus improving your metabolic function.

4. IMPROVES BRAIN FUNCTION

Fasting has shown to improve brain function, because it boosts the production of a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF activates brain stem cells to convert into new neurons, and triggers numerous other chemicals that promote neural health. This protein also protects your brain cells from changes associated with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. Dr. Razeen Mahroof, of the University of Oxford in the UK, explains that the use of fat for energy can help preserve muscle and reduce cholesterol levels.

"A detoxification process also occurs, because any toxins stored in the body's fat are dissolved and removed from the body," he adds, noting that after a few days of fasting, higher levels of endorphins - "feel-good" hormones - are produced in the blood, which can have a positive impact on mental well-being.

5. IMPROVES IMMUNE SYSTEM

Intermittent fasting improves the immune system because it reduces free radical damage, regulates inflammatory conditions in the body and starves off cancer cell formation.

A study conducted by Dr. Valter Longo and colleagues from the University of Southern California found longer periods of fasting may even "reboot" the immune system, clearing out old immune cells and regenerating new ones - a process they say could protect against cell damage caused by factors such as aging and chemotherapy.

THE BEST OF ALL MEDICINES IS RESTING AND FASTING

Benjamin Franklin

"When you starve, the system tries to save energy, and one of the things it can do to save energy is to recycle a lot of the immune cells that are not needed, especially those that may be damaged," Dr. Longo explains.

In a study, published in the journal Cell Stem Cell, a team found that repeated cycles of 2-4 days without food over a 6-month period destroyed the old and damaged immune cells in mice and generated new ones.

6. ENHANCES BODY'S RESISTANCE TO STRESS

Chronic stress has been associated with heart disease, premature aging, poor skin quality and more. Multiple studies have shown that using intermittent fasting helps to enhance the body's resistance to harmful stress. It helps to fight free radicals by improving the body's protective chemicals.

After fasting, the blood is filled with better levels of endorphins, which makes you more alert and provides you with a feeling of good mental health. Studies have also provided evidence of healthy aging of the brain, which is attributed to calorie restriction and intermittent fasting. The effects of fasting are considered similar to that of exercise.

With the potential health benefits of fasting widely hailed by nutritionists worldwide, it is no wonder many of us are putting our love of food to one side in order to give it a try.

DUA ACTION PLAN

Here are some pointers on helping one's Dua be accepted:

1. Raising the Hands.

The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said: 'Your Lord, may He be blessed and exalted, is Kind and Most Generous, and He is too kind to let His slave, if he raises his hands to Him, bring them back empty.' (Abu Dawood, 1488)

'When you ask of Allah, ask of Him with the palms of your hands, not with the backs of them.' (Abu Dawood, 1486)

2. Praise Allah.

Whilst the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam was sitting, a man came in and prayed and said, 'O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on

me.' The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, 'You have been too hasty, O worshipper. When you have prayed and are sitting, praise Allah as He deserves to be praised, and send blessings upon me, then call upon Him.' (Tirmidhi, 3476)

According to another version: 'When one of you prays, let him start with praise of Allaah, then let him send blessings upon the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, then let him ask whatever he likes after that.'

3. Blessings on the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam.

The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said: 'Every duaa is kept back until you send blessings upon the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam.'

(Tabarani, 1:220)

4. Be Confident.

'Call upon Allah being certain of a response, and remember that Allah will not answer a duaa that comes from a negligent and heedless heart.' (Tirmidhi, 3479)

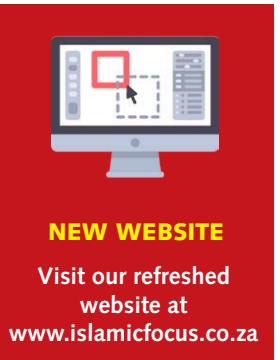


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EASTERN CAPE TOLL OF HUNGER... A DYING SHAME

Since March last year, 342 children had been admitted to Dora Nginza Hospital with severe acute malnutrition, the Eastern Cape Department of Health said.

Over the same period, 20 children died in Nelson Mandela Bay, including four who were brought in from other towns but died within a day of being admitted to hospital.

"The average estimated financial cost per case is R65 826," he said. They are in hospital on average for 30 days.

A study by Nelson Mandela University's department of dietetics last year looked at the health of 1 562 children in the Motherwell and Ibhayi areas below the age of five.

They found that 17% of children younger than 24 months were stunted due to malnutrition, as were 10% of children between two and four and 16% of children between four and five.

In answer to a question in parliament, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said they had seen 8 228 children aged under five in the Eastern Cape for malnutrition over the past three years

10
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